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Just How To  
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# JUST HOW TO CONCENTRATE

By  
ELIZABETH TOWNE



“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do,  
do it with thy might.” —BIBLE









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do it with thy might."—Bible*

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## APPLIED CONCENTRATION

How may I learn concentration? is a question oft repeated. And answered. And again repeated. So I am going to tell you about the easiest, most natural, helpful, kill-two-birds-with-one-stone method I know of. And I can vouch for its efficacy.

But first, let us be sure we know what we are aiming to do. To concentrate one's mind is to turn *all* of one's thought upon one thing NOW. You cannot concentrate all your thought upon either past or future because present surroundings will demand some measure of attention. But just Here and Now is a shining focus for all your thought.

There are two sides of that shining point: the "world I AM" and the "world *I do*."

Thought comes from the silent, unseen side "I AM" out *into* that "*I do*." Now cogitate that well. "I AM" is the womb of thought, of all things. What "*I do*" is "borned" thought.

But by far the larger part of our thoughts never get into the world "*I do*." Most of our thoughts are still-born, choked to death coming through that shining passage between the "world I AM" and the "world *I do*."

What chokes them?—*we do*. The "world *I do*" refuses to receive what I AM. You see, when all is said and done, it is *what I do* that rules the universe, seen and unseen. Or, to better express it, it is what I do which *utilizes* the unseen, the I AM, the God of the universe.

And what do you suppose causes us to refuse to re-

ceive thought from "the world I AM?" *Our will* shuts up that shining passage-way and chokes back what I AM.

Fear thoughts are shadow children born among the incompleteness of "the world *I do*."

But as long as we do not *know* this, these shadow children affect us as potently as do the real thought children of "the world I AM." Sometimes they affect us more powerfully than the real thoughts, because they are more tangible to the senses we have been wont to exercise in the "world *I do*."

*Our will is worked by the thought-children we entertain.* Remember that.

Remember, too, that "I AM *what I desire to be*." I AM omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence; I AM love, life, energy, beauty, grace.

And *never mind* the shadow thoughts of incompleteness.

Thus you will relax and let thoughts from "the world I AM" come through the shining way into *what you do*.

*That shining way is the NOW.*

Now are we ready to be still and let what I AM come into *this thing I do*.

Do you perceive what is meant by "concentration?"

Concentration is the *letting* of what I AM into what *I do*. There is no straining about it, no tension of mind or body, no hurry, worry or fear. It is just to *be still* and *let* what I AM do *one thing* Now.

But that is just what we don't want to do. We watch the shadow imps of fear, hurry and worry and keep all our nerves so strained that the shining way is contracted and little or nothing of what I AM gets into what *I do*. What *I do* is built principally of the shadow imps of incompleteness, hurry, worry, fear.

All strength comes from what I AM. Therefore this strain shuts off most of our strength and we are afflicted with that tired feeling.

*Laziness* comes from the same cause. A lazy person lives in the realm of what I AM. His thoughts there are so pretty and so swift moving that when he turns his gaze upon the realm *I do*, the incompletenesses there and the comparative slowness of motion with so *much* to do simply paralyze his will and deaden the shining way, the Now.

Concentration is the only cure for laziness or overwork, or indeed for any other ill ever conjured by shadow imp. You can readily see that there is not an hour of the day when you cannot practice concentration, when you cannot let what I AM into what *I do*, if only you WILL.

But there is the rub—we are so in the *habit* of straining after the imps of hurry that we WILL do it. I have hit upon a time and way to practice concentration, however, a time and way no human being can have excuse for not improving. The time he uses any way; the action is common to the race. And, alas, the manner of its doing is pretty common too.

I refer to the act of eating. Until we came into our new flat we “boarded ’round” at cafes and public dining rooms. I have been observing American table manners, and I’ve discovered that, with the exception of the leisure “400,” where banqueting is made a fine art, the American man (and his wife is a close second) puts mighty little of what I AM into what *I do* at the table.

I have discovered a use for the “leisure classes.” They exist as a shining example of what our manners and dressing (barring a change in style) will be when we, the “workers,” have acquired the art of concentration and have learned to let what I AM into ALL that



*I do.* We all put what I AM into *some* of our doings—some do one thing well, some another. The artist lets what I AM into his art; the musician into his music; the inventor into his invention; the *good* housewife into her housekeeping, etc. The “400,” having let what I AM into his money making in some previous state, so that he now attracts all he needs without effort, is now letting what I AM into his *every movement*, his manners and dress.

Perfection is only accomplished by letting what I AM (beauty, grace, strength, use) into *each ONE thing* as *it is to be done*—by “making a business of it.”

Every one thing done as I AM makes it easier to do the next thing. Control of self in one thing conduces to further and finer control. No act in one’s long, whole life is so insignificant but that letting what I AM into it (I AM beauty, grace, conservation of energy, use-*full*-ness) makes it *easier* to let what I AM into succeeding acts, besides adding that one well performed act to the sum total of the world’s beauty and grace.

Let us become conscious of our table acts now, my dear, to the end that we make them beautiful and *habitual* and increase our capacity for adding grace and beauty in all our acts. “Work without art is brutality.” Let us concentrate our attention upon making an art of the eating habit.

Youth’s Companion tells a good story of a tenderfoot who sat, out West somewhere, at a public dining table with a broncho buster or something, whose manners were rather more artless than any I’ve seen in Holyoke or Portland, Oregon. The tenderfoot was so amazed that he perforce gazed until his open mouth and eyes attracted Mr. B. B.’s attention, “just at a moment when he was in the act of shoveling into his mouth a particularly enormous load on the end of a steel

case knife. He stopped short. 'Say, tenderfoot,' he shouted, with an emphasizing thump of his big fist on the table, 'I want you t' understand that I've got *manners*. But I hain't got time t' use 'em.' "

That is the trouble with us all. We have art—we ARE art—we ARE grace and beauty and usefulness. But we don't allow ourselves time to *use* what we are. We use what the shadow imps are.

Any action without art is "brutality," is crudity; is a *waste of energy*. Such action is a libel on the "world I AM."

Why, do you know that if one of us owned a fodder chopper, which puffed and blew, hitched, halted and—yes—*slobbered*, wasting as much fodder and energy in proportion as most of our human eating machines do every meal (except when we have visitors!) we would straightway relegate that fodder mill to the junk heap? If your sewing machine or your typewriter rattled and clicked and clashed, you would straightway put some of what I AM into it—you would give it a little *attention* until it ran smoothly.

Well then, be as kind to yourself—and your neighbor. *Express* in this twice-or-thrice-a-day activity, what you ARE. Practice concentration three times a day.

If you will do this, and do it *faithfully*, until you have acquired the *art* of eating, in place of the old slovenly or hurried habits we learned as savages, perhaps, if you will *put yourself* into your eating, it will revolutionize for you your entire world of *doing*. You may get up from the table and hurry and worry as you please until the next meal; but if you will just faithfully practice when you *are* at meals you will find yourself gradually coming to work more quietly, intelligently, cheerfully, gracefully between meals.

And if you have indigestion you will lose it. Indi-

gestion is due to physical and mental hurry, worry and flurry. Cultivating quietness cures stomach disorders.

Read a book on table manners. Read it intelligently. It will help you just as looking at some other artist's fine work helps an artist. People who write books on table manners have made eating an art.

But their deductions are not strait-jackets for you. For instance, if you read: "Vegetables must always be eaten with a fork," and some one gives you creamed tomatoes or peas in cream, *use your brains*—and a teaspoon. Seek not to memorize rules, but try to *gain pointers* upon the quietest, neatest, most graceful way of conveying food to your mouth. Put *intelligence* and *just* the right amount of will into each motion. When you raise a nice, compact little morsel gracefully, quietly toward your mouth, don't let a shadow imp of hurry impel you to toss your open mouth half way to catch a bite. The morsel will not get away.

We learned that little trick when we were puppies and caught flies, or had to catch the hunk our masters threw us before our brothers gobbled it up. We do not need that motion now. It is a waste of energy.

Any motion which serves no real purpose is both wasteful and ungraceful.

When you have deposited the compactly cut little morsel in your mouth close your mouth and *taste*. Keep your mouth closed, chew slowly and noiselessly and *enjoy* with all your mind and soul and body.

Don't "chew thirty times." Chew as long as you can *consciously enjoy* that particular mouthful. Then swallow it and take another nice little morsel of whatever you think will taste best after that last bit.

When some one asks you to pass something, see how quietly and daintily you can do it. See how *smoothly*



you can change from one motion to another. *Act the grace I AM.*

Nothing will help you to a proper concentration at meal times like beginning aright. Say grace before meals.

Not the ecclesiastical kind. Say to yourself, "I AM GRACE," and resolve to do yourself credit in every motion. Remember that this is your time for concentration, for LETTING what I AM flow into what I *do*. Remember that NOW is the accepted time to be saved from shadow imps. Remember, *this one motion I make* this one thing I do—I ENJOY MYSELF.

This is to "glorify God and enjoy Him"—to glorify your I AM by *good works*.

A persistent observance of these times of concentration *will save you from all sins*; i. e., missing the mark.

Practice makes perfect.

When one has gained control of himself he does not miss the mark.

Once there was a rich captain called Naaman. He had the leprosy and wanted Elisha to heal him. Elisha told him to do a very simple little thing seven (the number of perfection) times. Naaman was disgusted and *very nearly missed* being healed. He wanted Elisha to do all for him. He hated, too, to be told to do such a common, everyday thing.

But wisdom prevailed.

I wonder if today there are any Naamans?

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## MEMORY DRILLS

Memory is the result of concentration, not the kind that is manufactured by gazing unblinkingly at a black spot on the wall, but the real kind that results from a

whole-souled *interest* in the thing to be remembered.

A child never forgets anything until he begins to sit all day in school with a dummy of a teacher who is too lazy, ignorant, unwilling or overworked to make study understandable and interesting to the child mind. So the child gradually loses the habit of entering whole-souledly into the thing in hand. Things are done "because we have to do them."

Here is where "duty" is born. As the child grows, duty sways him more and more; and in proportion as duty enters a life, *interest leaves it*.

Interest is a soul passion which goes out spontaneously to anything which can *teach* the soul.

Interest is love, attraction, *polarization*. But duty switches it off and paralyzes it.

The aim in teaching children should be to interest them in the thing to be learned. This trains them up in the way they should go.

But suppose you have grown up without the use of the faculty of interest, as most of us have, more or less. What of it? Suppose you have grown up without learning to dance, is that any reason for never dancing? You can learn to dance, and you can learn to be interested.

In proportion as you are *interested* in a thing, in that proportion will it cling to your memory.

Interest is polarization. If *all* your attention is turned toward a thing it is *instantaneously* photographed on the memory. This is just as true at one hundred years of age as at ten. Just in proportion as interest decreases will the photographing process take longer.

Interest is *soul-light* for memory photographing. In memory pictures there are flash lights, snap shots and time exposures of various lengths of exposure. The difference in time required to impress the picture on

memory depends upon the amount of *interest* flashed upon it. Interest is a matter of cultivation and direction.

The great trouble with people is *diffused interest*—interest spread over a great area, instead of collected and turned at will, like a searchlight, upon one thing at a time. When you do anything your thought is diffusing over a dozen other things. Stop short, *collect* your thought and turn it *all* on this one thing you do. Stand still a moment, take a slow, full breath and say to yourself, “I am doing *this one thing now*, with *all* my mind and soul and interest.” Then *do* it with *all* your mind in it. *You will remember it.*

Keep at this practice, no matter what you want to do or learn. See how much thought and interest and *time* you can put into each thing. Make a *business* of doing one thing at a time with your whole soul. Your interest in life will revive and increase and you will *remember* better and better. This is the *only* practical memory drill I know of, and I know it to be effective; furthermore I believe it to be infallible. If you *practice* it faithfully for a year or two you will prove its merits for yourself. If you *won't practice*, all the “memory culture” on earth can't improve your memory.

One great cause of forgetfulness is the attempt to *stuff* memory with a lot of irrelevant facts. The memory is an *organization* just as the body is. Indeed, I wonder if memory is not formed and reformed after the same pattern, and in exactly the same way that the body is. At any rate, it is formed and reformed by the same law—the law of Love, or attraction.

You can no more stuff successfully the memory than you can the body. When you swallow a dinner, the first thing that happens to the food is dissolution. Then *some* of the particles are taken up by the blood, carried to various parts of the body and *built in, according to*



*patterns already begun.* Much of that which is taken into the body is utterly rejected and ejected with the effete matter. Why? Because it does not *fit in*.

Just so with the memory. I have heard people lament because they "can't remember what they read." In the first place, they insist upon reading something they "ought" to know, but something which is *not* called for by the mental appetite. There is at best only a perfunctory interest in the reading, and after the matter is read it is not assimilated, for it finds no place where it *fits*. So almost the whole thing is rejected by memory.

One should never read without a distinct mental appetite for the thing he is reading. Then he will stand some show of assimilating what he reads.

"Oh," I hear some one say, "if I read only what I'd *like* to read, I'd feast daily on novels and read nothing really helpful."

Not so; unless you *surfeit* yourself with trashy reading. If one has an abnormal appetite for candy, he can follow his liking until he makes himself sick and nature abhors candy ever after; or he can deny himself *all* food until he really *wants* bread and butter. A little judicious fasting will quickly *cure* the candy craving, which is abnormal, and *create* a bread and butter appetite, which is natural and healthy.

*Mental and physical stuffing is at the bottom of every unnatural craving of the mind or body.*

*Mental and physical fasting will restore normal, healthy hunger for mental and physical food.*

MIND AND BODY ARE ONE.

If your appetite calls for trashy reading, it is ten to one a PHYSICAL FAST of a day or two, or five or six, *will cause you to hunger for substantial reading* as well as bread and butter. *Mind and body are one.* Your

mind is written on your body in terms of bread and butter—and candy, alcohol, etc.

*A lazy mind and an appetite for alcoholics will succumb to a little fasting.* Try it. Fast every third day the first week, then every other day for the next week. “*Eat air*” in plenty; drink lots of water; and exercise *vigorously* several times a day. Then after the two weeks, eat no breakfasts and live principally on apples and cereals—no meat. When *everything* else has failed to heal and wake you to childhood brightness this practice will help you.

This seems quite a digression from memory drills, but never mind. It is not so far as it appears at first glance. *For stuffing*, mental and physical, is often the prime cause of poor memory. Such living as I have described will clear your memory, as well as all your other faculties.

To live moderately, so that the body and mind, which are inseparable, shall not become clogged; and to do whole-souledly what thy hand or foot or tongue or *thoughts* find to do, is not only a sure cure for loss of memory, but for lost interest, beauty and youth as well. It is the dispeller of pessimism and grief, and the creator of eternal and life glory. It is the foundation of heaven and the life principle of gods. And it will free every faculty to higher self-expression.

Go thou and fast that thou mayst cast aside every weight; do with thy might each thing thou findest to do; and be kind to thy neighbors and thyself.

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## JUST HOW TO CONCENTRATE

Six little puppies played in the corner. One was asleep, two squabbled over a bone and the other three

tumbled in a lazy, happy, wriggling heap of white feet, silky ears, noses, and curly brown wool. The door cre-e-e-aked softly, and suddenly every puppy was alert, head and tail up and eyes and nose pointed straight at that door—ready to charge fiercely, or to scuttle under the table out of harm's way, as the revealing door might happen to indicate.

The actions of those six puppies are a perfect illustration of the qualities which make up concentration, which is the key to all success. First, there is relaxation, a letting go; when the human faculties, muscles and nerves are all expanded to receive influx of power and wisdom in which we live and move and have our being, as fishes live and move and have their being in water. When we absolutely *let go*, *our* faculties play, as the puppies did—*play and grow*. When we are relaxed we follow the same instinct that the hen follows as she settles contentedly in the dust, ruffles out all her feathers, closes her eyes dreamily and *lets* sun and air and earth currents play through and rejuvenate her.

Without periods of this complete letting go, letting the puppies in us play and the hens in us bask and ruffle in the sun, as if there never had been and never could be anything else to do in the world—without these periods of opening ourselves to the play of the Universal, there can be no times of perfect concentration and accomplishment.

We need to let ourselves play at all times when there is nothing definite to *do* or think. Instead of making this complete change from action to *letting* ourselves play, we keep our minds grumbling along night and day about what we want to do, or what we “can’t” do, or what somebody else doesn’t do or does do.

Now, our nerves and muscles are controlled by our thoughts. Every single thought affects every single



nerve and muscle. And these continuous, strenuous thoughts of ours keep our nerves and muscles strung up to such a tension that we cannot receive the wisdom and will of the universe as the old hen receives her rejuvenating sun bath.

So the first step toward concentration is to let go— let things go to the demnition bow wows or any other old place, whilst *you* receive power from on high.

When you go to bed at night REMEMBER this. Think of the hen and the puppies; *let go* each and everything in earth, heaven and hell; ruffle yourself all out loose and limp and invite wisdom and will to fill and re-create you whilst you sleep. You will wake a new creature in the morning.

Just as you cannot take one long breath and make it last you all day, so one nightly relaxing will not admit power and wisdom enough to last all day. As you reach the end of each piece of work let go not only of that but of everything else for a few moments. Just see how limp you can get; take slow breaths and *enjoy* yourself. Then go on with renewed powers to the next thing.

When you are relaxed you gain power.

When you are concentrated you use power.

As the door cre-e-e-aked, all that puppy power, gained whilst they played, was *concentrated*, focused. In proportion as we relax and let our faculties *play*, in that proportion will our faculties *concentrate* when they are needed.

Concentration is polarization of our faculties. Consider each faculty as a separate puppy with its own attention and power; when there is something to be *done*, all these puppy powers should become instantly alert in the one direction. This is polarization, concentration, the key to success.

If you relax between times and *let* your faculties

play it will be *fun* to concentrate them when there is something to concentrate for.

Concentration consists in turning *all* the attention on *one* thing at a time. You may turn it *all* on the sweeping of a floor and the sweeping becomes easy and a pleasure. But if half your attention is pulling another way the sweeping will be drudgery—and half done—because only half your powers are put into it.

Your power goes where your *attention* goes. Divided attention is divided power, causes disintegration of mind and body, and ends in death.

You may turn *all* your attention and energy upon the simplest work and make it a joy. You may turn it all on a difficult piece of work and make a success of it, where divided attention would make it a failure. You may turn *all* your attention upon each thing that turns up and so make life a succession of successes.

*"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it WITH THY MIGHT,"* This is concentration.

Whatsoe'er thou *thinkest*, think it WITH THY MIGHT. This is concentration. How do you think as a rule?—"I *must* do this—I *hate* to do it—Why should I have to?"—all tearing your mind (and body) to pieces. Stop short; say, "I CHOOSE to do this with *all* my might"; stamp your foot and *say* it. That statement said with *determination* will act upon your attention and powers as the cre-e-e-ak acted upon the puppies. And you will do the work well and with pleasure. This is concentration.

"This *one* thing I do" is the voice of concentration.

Besides concentration upon the one thing you find to do *now*, there should be periods of concentration upon your aims or ideals. Close your eyes to the world of action and think out definitely just *what* your highest ideals and aims are. Look them all over mentally, and

see if you can't enlarge the ideals and set the stakes higher.

When you have them all worked out *definitely* in your mind then AFFIRM them. To affirm a thing is literally *to make* firmer. The WORD, or statement is *the creative power*. AFFIRM your ideals.

Whatever you can imagine in the way of ideals and aims *is in you*. It is *YOU*. Say to yourself, "These beautiful ideals and aims are ME—the highest, brightest, *mightiest* part of ME. I *love* them all and I consecrate my life and all my soul and mind and body to the working out of this highest ME. I AM what I *desire* to be—I AM. I rejoice in myself—I *glory* in my beauty, power, wisdom, love! I AM! I AM! *all I desire*."

*That* is the mount of transfiguration. Go thou up into it often and talk with The Highest. Then come down with shining face and do with joy the Next Thing.

This is concentration and SUCCESS.

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## CONCENTRATION AND POISE

"Can you teach or rather advise how to concentrate one's mind (thoughts)? For instance when I figure up a column of figures and someone is talking in the room I hear every word of what is said and it annoys me. Also when I read the papers in a street car and someone speaks loudly near me, it will affect me in such a manner that I will have finished reading an article without having caught the meaning of same."—G. H.

The first step in *any* desirable direction is to cease scattering your mind still farther by being "annoyed." To be annoyed is literally to *fly* to pieces.

Sometimes this habit of hearing things beyond the limits of your work is not due to lack of concentration

at all. Some men can add accurately long columns of figures and hardly give them a thought, whilst at the same time they are receiving impressions from all about them. It is said Napoleon could write two separate and distinct letters and carry on a conversation all at the same time, without a single blunder.

I once saw a girl of fifteen write *without a single mistake* about 30 invitations to a party, addressing all the envelopes, the while her mother read aloud a most exciting story. These cases are not illustrations of mental scatteration but of intense concentration. The ability to do two or three things at once is the result of having made so good a *habit* of doing each thing separately that it can now be done with very little *conscious* attention. Consequently several things can be done with ease, at one time.

A trained pianist is an example of the same sort. Time was when he had to pay conscious attention to every movement of his fingers, but by constant practice he has developed *brains in his fingers*, which subconsciously take care of his finger action. If you have developed some certain area of brain to such a degree that it will take care of a column of figures whilst your percepts take in a conversation, you have cause for *rejoicing*, not annoyance. It requires great self-command to do such a thing.

If you make a mistake whilst at such work it may be due more to the disturbance of brain cells caused by the annoyance, rather than by any real inability on your part to add a column and hear a remark at the same time.

At any rate, the more you give way to annoyance and recognition of the habit of sensing double, the more steadfastly you will set the habit of mental scatteration.

The correct attitude to assume is this: "I am quiet



and confident, and ready to give to this work *abundant* attention to do it accurately, rapidly and with ease. My *interest* is in it. At the same time I have *plenty* more attention with which to catch impressions of whatever else will be *interesting or useful to me.*" *Begin* your work after deliberately and resolutely stating this to yourself and assuming the corresponding mental attitude—the attitude of *easy power*. Then whenever you catch yourself lapsing, stop a moment, straighten up, take a slow, full breath through the nostrils and resume your mental attitude of power.

Many a time has a stray impression picked up by a bit of stray attention, proved afterwards of great value. The law of attraction works here, as in more ponderable things—your attention catches what fits *somewhere* in your mind, and life. Welcome it, and above all things *keep sweet and steady*.

I should say there is something radically wrong with the mind that could assume a lazy attitude in a car, with a page of ordinary newspaper before its eyes, and yet fail to notice when "someone speaks loudly near" it. Newspaper matter is so diluted to fill space (as a rule) that it requires but a very slight accession of interest in a real *live* direction to switch the mind off. People do not raise their voices unless they are pretty well interested, and the listener's mind catches momentarily their pitch of vibration, even though the real *cause* of their excitement does not interest him.

The intense uninterruptible concentration of mind the writer of the above seems to desire would be a doubtful accomplishment. If acquired he would miss completely that immense fund of "picked up" information which is really the major part of every man's and woman's education. In his strained *preoccupation* (for that, and not concentration, is really the fitting word

for the state of mind he seems to desire) he would miss many a business tip that he might have gained from overheard conversations, as well as interesting bits of knowledge on innumerable subjects. And then there is the added knowledge of human nature that comes with every bit of *real life* which interests us.

Our little 5 per cent conscious mind does not always know what is best for us to pay attention to, but you may depend that *whatever attracts* your attention when you are reading a newspaper in a car, is the thing of paramount importance for that time and place. The paper can wait. Learn to vibrate with these little attractions, learn to *enjoy* them, and you can well *afford* to wait for the newspaper news, or even to miss it altogether. If the thing in a newspaper is a more vital interest than that outside of it you will have no trouble in keeping your thoughts on the paper.

Something that is of vastly more importance to you than the ability to "*bury* yourself in the newspaper" (truly expressive phrase is that) is the power to *turn* readily as attention is called from the printed article or back to it again. The power of POISE is the greatest power of all. To turn *readily* with the attention, and then to return readily to the original subject, is the cap sheaf of accomplishment and real power. The mind should be as delicately poised as is the eye. Look straight ahead of you a moment, and note how easily and pleurably the eye is *attracted* from one moving thing to another, and yet another, and is with equal pleasure withdrawn again. No friction, on *tearing away* from anything. But after your mental eye, your attention, has been attracted from your paper to some living interest beside you, it still *hangs on* to the paper. Then when you have succeeded in dragging it back again to the article, it is still *hanging on* to the outside interest.

and you are a divided, stirred up mentality, fit for nothing. You call it being "annoyed."

Learn to *let go*. Go *with* your attention and *enjoy* with it, instead of letting your attention drag you around as you have seen an irrepressible small boy drag his elders on circus day. *Wake up and take the lead*.

This is the true road to self-control—to mind-control. At first you may find yourself in the same predicament with a man I read about. He had been lauding to a visitor the fine points and quick obedience of his dog, and now he meant to show him off a bit. "Come here, Towze!" he called. Towze, promptly tucked his tail down and crawled under the bed. But his master was equal to the occasion. "Well, go under the bed then! I *will* be minded!"

If in the beginning of your attempts at concentration your mind serves you such tricks, just change your orders! Above all things, be minded.

Go *with* your attention, and enjoy with it; call it *good*, not perverted; treat it with respect; get into its confidence and *speak kindly* to it; and after a bit of practice you will find it minding your directions. You will find master and servant approaching each other—master will become less harsh and arbitrary and servant more trusting and obedient. Your attention is not a dog that can be clubbed into dumb submission on newspaper pap—oh, no. He is an *intelligent, faithful* animal that needs only *understanding and love*, with a reasonable amount of *liberty*, to make him a most satisfying friend.

If when you are at work your attention wanders to such an extent that your work shows mistakes, of course there must be a change. *Call back* your thoughts, take a slow, full breath, straighten up a moment, and resolutely but *kindly*, PUT your thoughts into your work

again. Keep repeating this little exercise until your thoughts stay put. They will eventually. Practice will accomplish anything in time.

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## THE RIGHT PULL

"I have a passion for drawing but no opportunity to cultivate it. How can I succeed? Most advisers say, Work, practice. I *have* worked and practiced, and can copy almost any drawing in pen and ink or crayon. But this is not all I am striving for. I wish to acquire originality. There are no schools here where I might learn, and being married I have to work and cannot leave town every day. It may seem unreasonable to you for me to talk of despair when I am but twenty-five years old ; but I must say I cannot see my way to success when so many tell me I cannot get what I wish without a pull or a large bank account." F. C.

Neither a pull nor a bank account will enable you to "get what you wish." It takes talent and an indomitable WILL to do it. The talent you may have now ; the will you *can* have if you keep eternally at it. Will is developed by use.

Where do you suppose the United States would be now if Abraham Lincoln had consulted other people, talked about "pulls," "bank accounts," schools and—discouragement? Surely if any man on earth had a right to failure it was Abe Lincoln, the rail splitter, the backwoodsman, the son of a nobody, the less-than-nobody, who never saw a school nor dreamed of a bank account or a pull.

It is what's IN a man which makes him a failure or a success. Pulls, schools, bank accounts are *less* than 0. The right man will make his own schools and bank ac-



counts; *he will work his own pull on the occult strings of all creation.* He will blaze a new trail to the success he wants; a *straight* trail, a short cut. He will make a bee line through any sort of conditions, straight to the goal. His individual pull on the universal will drag conditions themselves into line. *All things will work together for him, and adverse circumstances will prove themselves his greatest friends.*

The man who "despairs" is depending upon favoring winds to blow him into port. He draws pictures with which to catch the favoring breezes of applause and money. Adverse criticisms or lack of money are head winds against which he has *not the will* to make his way.

An Abe Lincoln would find *some* way to make progress against those head winds; and the intelligence thus developed would but add to the greatness and glory of his ultimate success.

The man who can be sidetracked by adverse conditions is on the wrong track to begin with.

He has not the *deep* love for his art which would make him the sort of success he dreams of; the love which will compel expression; or else he is paralyzed by lack of belief in his ability to win.

Many a man discovers in himself some little trick and mistakes it for a real talent. A little *applause* drew his attention to the trick; a longing for *more* applause keeps him at it. As long as the world will keep on tickling his bump of approbation and filling his purse he will continue to perform his little trick. Let the world grow indifferent; let money grow scarce; let conditions prick him a bit; and he "despairs."

But a real genius joys in his work, let applause or money ebb or flow as it will. And he never tries to "acquire originality." He *is* original. No copying for him. He sees a thing illumined by his own soul; he

jots it down *as he sees it*. He does not copy it as some one else has seen it.

What do you suppose the world wants of a copyist anyway? A camera will do the copying act far more accurately and quickly than the best of artists can hope to do it, and far more cheaply. After the world's first surprise that you can copy at all it will give its applause to the camera. Then, if you are *only* a copyist you will "despair" and drop into some other line of work—the first that comes handy, or the one with the most dollars in it.

This is always the fate of the copyist *in any line of work*. He drops into the easiest place (it's generally a thorny one!) and works for what money and applause he can get; whilst most of his mental energy goes out in grumbling at his "fate" and lamenting his lack of "pulls," bank accounts, etc. Incidentally he knocks everybody he thinks *has* a pull or a bank account.

Not so with a *real artist* in *any* line. Old Abe was a real artist. He *observed* carefully; he word painted in the foreground the actual facts observed; he filled in with related facts; and over all shed the glory of his own prophetic soul. Neither the applause nor the condemnation nor the indifference of men moved him; or prevented his presenting his next word picture exactly as *he* saw it. No "copying" for Abe Lincoln; no "despair." Just a steady *pushing ahead* on the lines indicated by his soul's urge. It was that *within* Abe Lincoln which counted, and which *made* a way, despite apparently insurmountable obstacles.

Emma Abbott who for a generation charmed the world with her voice, was another illustration of what real genius does with circumstances. She was the daughter of poverty, without the shadow of a pull or the apparent possibilities of a bank account. It was

said by the teachers to whom she went later that *she had not even a voice*. Everybody she knew prophesied failure. And yet Emma Abbott became one of the world's great singers, a glorious success. And later all her teachers and friends said it was *work*—the keeping-everlastingly-at-it kind—which made Emma Abbott a success. Of that which the world calls genius she had none to begin with; but an unswerving WILL she had, *by the use of which she developed genius*.

She was true to her ideal. She wanted to sing gloriously, to express the joy of her own soul. Discouragements, lack of opportunities, a dearth of voice, were as nothing to her, so strong and steady was her desire, her *love*. Her determined soul placed upon the universe so steady an urge that money, pulls, even voice itself *had to come*.

Oh, ye of little faith, the world is *full* of folks who have *made their own opportunities*. Why not you among them? Ah, the fault lies *within*, not without.

The one reason for failure is *a weak and vacillating desire*, which is a curable disease.

The remedy? *To go in to win and stick to it*, desire or no desire, conditions or no conditions; *to keep your goal everlastingly in sight by eternally affirming, affirming, AFFIRMING it; to put every spare minute and spare thought into PRACTICE of the best sort you know of; to CONSIDER ALL YOUR DUTIES AS DIRECT EXERCISE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENIUS YOU MEAN TO MANIFEST; to do with all your loving interest each and everything you find necessary to do*.

Circumstances may *seem* to be against you; *but they are not*. They are exactly the circumstances *you need* to develop the *all-round manhood which is the foundation of the true artist*. Meet your conditions as Jef-

fries met his trainer every day whilst getting ready for his recent victory; train down to fighting weight, drop all handicaps of tobacco, drink, high living and unnecessary display of dress, and meet your circumstances like a MAN. Get up your spiritual muscle on everything that comes.

*You can win.* But you can't win against handicaps of bad habits of mind and body, and you can't win if you meet conditions whining or despairing.

Cast aside every weight, including the shortcoming which most *easily besets you, and run with patience* the race set before you *by your own ideal*; and verily success is sure—though it may be slow.

Don't be a get-there-quick concern. Let patience have her *perfect* work.

\* \* \* \* \*

I know an artist. As a student she made thousands upon thousands of pictures—and tore them all up. Not one was made by “copying” the picture of another artist. They were all sketched from “life”—a bit of drapery, a beam of sun across the floor, a flower in a vase, a chair, a table, a cozy corner, a lighted lamp, the figure of a friend at work, a child at play, an old vine-covered shed, etc. She made hundreds of drawings of the human hand, from casts and from life—and threw them into the waste basket. She painted the same things on canvas in oils—and burned them. She made dozens of pictures of an apple and a banana on a china plate—made them in pencil, in pen-and-ink, in crayon, in oils, in pastels—made them from every possible point of view and in all sorts of positions and lights—and burned them all up! She did the same thing with every common object which attracted her attention.

*Years* she put in at this sort of work before she ever tried to make things to sell.



Neither did she keep these pictures on the parlor table and parade them before her admiring friends. Her teachers—when she had teachers—were her only audience; and she was her own inexorable critic. Not until she could in some measure satisfy herself should others see her work. *She would not run the risk of being sidetracked by the applause of her friends*, who, however sincere, were not competent art critics. She meant to do *her best* work, not simply work “good enough” to satisfy the common run of people.

So she kept on making pictures—and burning them. This was her *education*. She learned to make pictures by making them—and burning them. Instead of looking at the picture she had made, she *looked at her model*; AND ALWAYS SHE SAW SOMETHING NOT OBSERVED BEFORE. Then she tried to reproduce what she observed. Gradually, *by infinite practice*, her fingers learned the trick of following her sight; and *by practice* her sight grew keen and accurate.

Now this friend of mine has a studio in New York City, and *makes money*. She goes abroad and—observes. Her fingers follow her eyes, easily, delightfully; a bit here, another there, another yonder, she combines and recombines. *She creates*; for original creation is but a *new combination of things already existent*. There is nothing entirely new under the sun; there is an intelligent turn of the kaleidoscope—that is all. But it is enough to keep the artist busy and beaming through all eternity.

Every human being is at heart a genius and an artist in the line indicated by his desire; *not* by his fleeting wishes, but his *desires*.

Fleeting wishes are based upon desire for applause or money. We look upon some other man's success and immediately there springs up a *wish* for the same sort

of success for ourselves. Numberless times we mistake wishes for real desires; we follow the wish with a great spurt, then tire and—follow some other wish.

A real desire manifests itself without regard to the success of others. It crops out unconsciously *when we are alone* in our thoughts; when we are not trying to key ourself to the pitch of somebody else. It is always in line with things we like to do when we are not trying to show off.

We tried to do it when we were children. I know a fine accountant and secretary who used as a boy to make little blank books and keep "Accounts of Who Owes Me." I know successful artists who used to get their fingers rapped for drawing little sketches all over the margins of their school books. I know an editor who used to write essays and stories—and hide them carefully for fear of being laughed at.

Every human being has a particular bent which is easy for him. He can become an *artist* on that line—IF he works it as my artist friend worked; as Emma Abbott and Abe Lincoln and all other successful people have worked.

Out in the wilds of Oregon, some ten years ago, I knew a family of prodigies. The father and mother held advanced ideas in regard to prenatal culture, and had predestined each child to its special prodigyship. The eldest was a very pretty girl of thirteen who "gave recitations" in splendid style. For her age she was really a prodigy. The three younger boys were equally prodigious in musical lines. The girl too played gospel hymns most satisfactorily.

Not one of these children had ever been trained, but even the four-year-old would stand up at the organ, pump away with one foot and play accurately and with feeling any song he had heard sung; improvising a

good *bass* as he went along. He reminded me of the pictures of Mozart at that age.

I was delighted with those children. They certainly had the necessary genius for setting the world agog. All they needed was the daily drill for developing their genius. After their little "concert" was over I shook hands with their father, who was their "manager," and expressed my pleasure. He beamed and basked and swelled a little. Then I prophesied: "With good training those children will do marvelous things in the world!" I said. Then he froze and we drifted apart in the crowd.

Afterward I learned the wherefore of that freeze. His ideas on prenatal culture were only a part of his "view." He considered that genius needed no training, no guidance. He thought geniuses, such as he had made of his children, were born so far in advance of the world that nobody could teach them anything. "Genius will take care of itself," he said. So his children "done grewed," like Topsy. He and his wife stood back in admiring complacency and watched the antics of Genius—except at such times as Genius was required to disport itself for the edification of elect gatherings (at twenty-five cents per head) in divers and sundry suburban and country school houses or churches.

But those four children grew faster than their genius did. Even country audiences failed to enthuse over childish genius when displayed by well grown boys and girls. Money and audiences grew slim. At sixteen the girl ran away, married an irresponsible, lived in a boarding house and dressed like a cross between a Spanish dancer and a lady's maid. At sixteen and one-half she ran away from her husband to perform in a ten-cent vaudeville show. I have never heard of her since. The boys, too, are utterly submerged. Four geniuses lost to

the world for lack of development, for lack of *work*. Verily an Emma Abbott with no genius but that of persistent effort is worth more than 10,000 born to the purple and atrophied for lack of practice.

For, doing tricks for the public plaudit is not the work which develops.

No genius is born above the world. He is born *in it*, and if he ever gets above it *he must climb by what the world already knows*. He must be able to do all that his teacher can do before he can hope to surpass his teacher. Prenatal culture is a grand thing; but it will not do the work of postnatal culture; of intelligent, persistent, *conscious* effort at self-development.

Those children, and their parents, too, have doubtless lost faith in their genius. It has not panned out as expected. Or, they have learned their mistake in despising the genius of hard work, and now imagine it "too late" to begin aright. Which is another mistake.

Those children were real geniuses. *They are yet geniuses.*

AND IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO DEVELOP  
GENIUS BY PERSISTENT AND INTELLIGENT  
PRACTICE.

Genius must learn to express through works.

Genius must be nurtured in the soul's stillness.

Would you develop your genius? Would you be painter, singer, poet, inventor, craftsman, business man, financier? In the spaces of your soul rest the wisdom and power.

Work it out.

Then *dig deeper*.

Take a special hour each day for exploring the depths of being.

Take *the same* hour each day; let nothing interfere.



Thus will the law of periodicity, of rhythm, aid you. A swing is hard to start; there is no *rhythm* to help you. After you have established a *rhythmic* movement a slight touch will keep it going.

So with your hours of self-exploration; at first it is *hard* to find time and place; it takes *effort* to do it, and results seem slight; but by and by you get into the swing of it; it almost does itself and results are greater. *Keep at it* until the rhythm is established.

To aid in establishing the rhythm see that you use every time the same straightbacked but comfortable chair, in the same spot, facing always the same way in a light and well ventilated room. Allow no interruptions—let 'em come again.

Sit bolt upright with muscles at rest. Breathe slowly, evenly, holding each breath a second or so before exhaling, and taking pains to exhale very slowly. Mouth closed, of course. Breathe thus for five or ten minutes. Then rise mentally and *float*. Simply *imagine* yourself in a limitless sea of wisdom and power. Imagine this sea playing in you and through you; *imagine it creating in you the necessary brain centers and cells for the accomplishment of what you desire*. Simply *be still and let it do the work*. Relax inside and out and trust yourself to this sea of divine energy. Simply *imagine*—that is all there is to it.

There is no power of mind or body which cannot be fully developed if you keep at this practice long enough *without changing your aim*. Every time your aim changes it is as if you stopped the swing. You have to begin all over again.

Go into the silence thus daily and *imagine* that you receive your heart's desire; and *verily you shall have it*.

In the silence you receive all wisdom and power.

In intelligent effort on practical lines you *work out* wisdom and power received in the silence.

Without both faith and works no man can succeed.  
Faith comes out of the silence.

Works are done in the noise.

We are all too noisy. Let's be still and know.

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## QUICK AND EASY CONCENTRATION

BY ALBERT BROSIUS

*Visualizing follows naturally if you use this new  
method and true process of concentration*

You can concentrate. You can do it at the first attempt.

Holding the mind on any one thought to the exclusion of others is done merely by maintaining *consciousness* of that thought.

Let us see what consciousness is. Psychology says it is a perception of relations, relation being *difference*. One illustration will prove this: If the black alphabetic letters on this page were printed on a black page, could you see them? Would you even know that they were there? You see the black letters because they are on white paper.

Now why is it that you are unable to prevent the mind from wandering off the thought on which you wish to hold it? The answer is: When you first think of a thing, you can think of it because it is first, because it is *DIFFERENT from that which immediately preceded it*. When you try to *hold* the same thought more than a second or two, it becomes the *SAME as its own*

*preperception*. Relation ceases, consciousness ends. To maintain objective consciousness the mind intrudes some *other* thought. This intrusion is what we call mind wandering.

All we have to do to maintain consciousness is to maintain *difference*. This is done by—*change*. *Change is a method of concentration*.

Here are the instructions for this method: Don't try to continue seeing the same thing. See the quality you want to hold in mind as going through a whole string of associations, each association persisting only a second or less. As an example let us hold in mind the general thought, *pencil*. It is *red*. It *breaks* in two. It is *green*. It is on a man's *ear*. It is made of *metal*. It is made of *wood*. It is on a *blotter*. It is in a *pocket*. So on to *infinity*. The associations can be as illogical as you like—you may see the pencil *jumping* on the floor. The idea is to use the change of the associations merely to hold one quality in mind. Of course where the thought you want to hold in mind is on a subject of which you can't see the whole at once, you can keep the subject in mind by going from one aspect of it to another *as quickly as possible*. You don't bother with association unless a vague aspect is touched. Then it may help to stop and see that part in a string of change.

Here is the caution and rule that makes this concentration so easy: *Don't try* to see vividly either the thing you want to hold in mind or its momentary changes. Just notice both with the degree of clarity common to you, no matter what that degree is. Vividness is naturally gained by the rapid change, which causes many relations or strong consciousness. In this manner vividness is cumulative.

The idea, that concentration is *holding*, has been

the cause of your previous failure. Practice the new method, the true process.

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## CONCENTRATION

(*A Story from the Mahabharata*)

BY P. R. CHIDAMBARA IYER, B. A.

The success of a New Thoughter's life may be measured by the amount of success he has attained in the art of concentrating his mind upon any cherished object. The Hindu sages of old knew the power of concentration and taught the secret of it in a number of ways. I wish to tell the readers of *Nautilus* a fine story from our scriptures which illustrate concentration and the way to acquire it.

The Kuru princes and the Pandava princes, who were cousins and rivals, and the foundling Karna, their playmate, were learning the science of statecraft and warfare under the venerable Brahman sage and warrior, Drona. Arjuna, the third among the Pandava brothers, was the most brilliant of them all and the talented Karna showed promise of being his equal.

One day Drona decided to hold an open competition in archery, in order to test the skill of his pupils. He made an artificial bird and had it placed on the top-most branch of a tall tree. The boys were assembled under the tree. They were to stand at an appointed spot a few paces away from the tree and to shoot an arrow and cut off the head of the bird. The boys were in great excitement and each hoped that he would accomplish the deed.

"Prince Duryodhana," said the sage, "you are the eldest of the Kurus and you shall be the first to try."



Duryodhana was glad. He stepped forward to the place appointed and stood steady and raised his bow. But Drona said, "First, tell me, prince, before you shoot. What do you see?"

Duryodhana made reply: "I see my master, my comrades, the tree and the bird."

"Enough, my prince, stand back. You are unfit to compete."

Duryodhana was ashamed and stood aside. The old sage asked his pupils one after another to come forward and put the same question to all of them. They all made the same answer. Drona was sad that all his toil was in vain, that none of his pupils could stand this simple test.

But the brilliant Arjuna and the talented Karna were yet to try their skill.

"Come, Karna," said the teacher, "either you or Arjuna should redeem my heart or else I will bury my weapons and go into exile."

Thereupon Karna looked at the aim and raised his bow prepared to shoot.

"What do you see, my son? The tree and the bird and all of us?"

"Nay, my master," said Karna, "I see only the tree and the bird."

"Stop. Put down the bow and stand aside. Arjuna, try thou and tell me what thou seest—the tree and the bird and me and your comrades?"

"No, my master," answered Arjuna, "I see only the bird."

"Now see," said Drona, "and describe the bird to me."

"My revered Sir, I cannot, for I see only its head."

"Then shoot, my prince," cried the old sage, his heart filled with joy, "you are the gem amongst archers."

Arjuna twanged his bow and loosed an arrow which went up and cut the head of the bird clean off its body. Thereupon Drona addressed his pupils and said: "How often have I told you, my boys, that you cannot hit, if your eyes dance away from your aim. You saw many things besides the bird, whereas Arjuna saw not even the bird but only its head. So Arjuna won."

Dear readers, this story must tell you what concentration is. Our great Sankara, a very God-man that came into the world to guide mankind through the path, teaches concentration in a simple and homely aphorism.

He says:

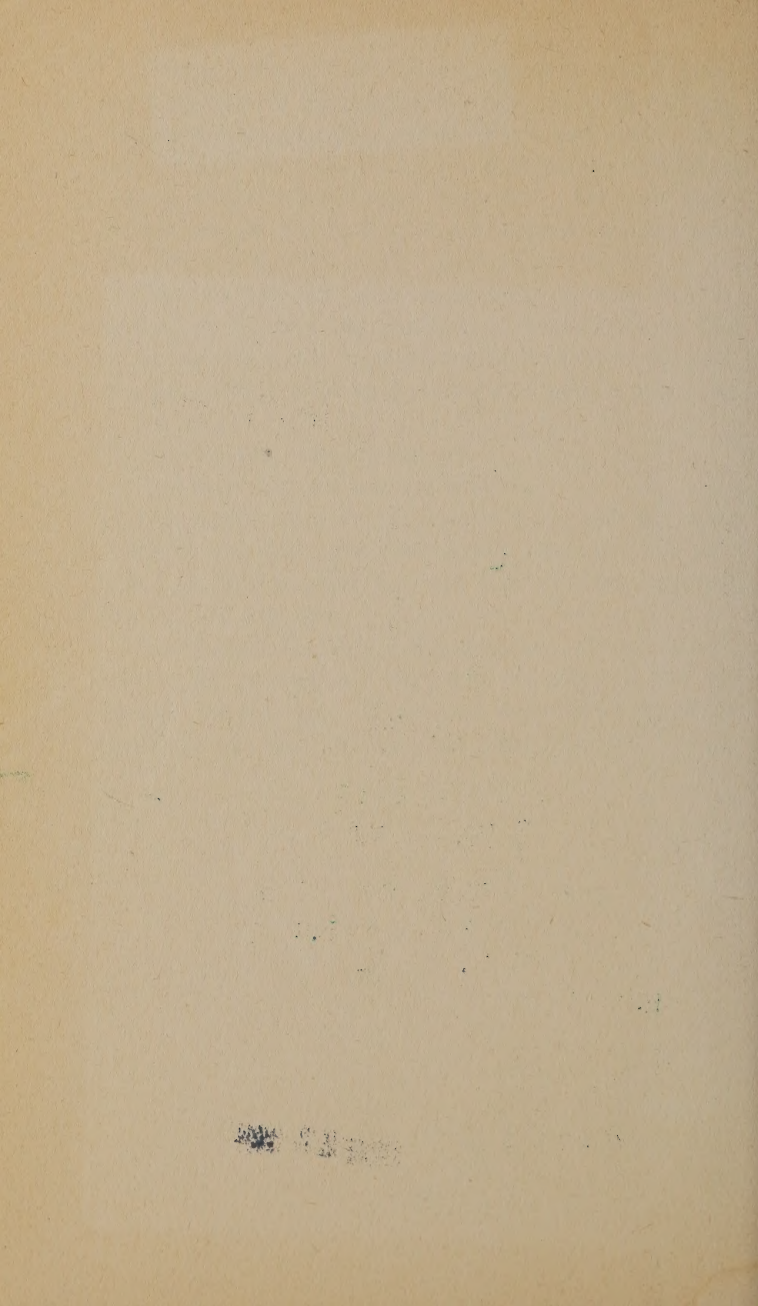
"See the dog, see not the slab

See the slab, see not the dog."

The figure of a dog is carved on a slab of stone. Look at the dog with your whole attention. If your mind is concentrated, you see only the dog and you do not see the slab.

Now look at the slab in the same way. Your mind is said to be concentrated when you see only the slab and do not see the dog. If you see both the dog and the slab you may be sure that your mind wanders.









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